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ABSTRACT

The use of Sino-Japanese in the vocabulary of the Japanese language has increased greatly since the Meiji Restoration of the mid-nineteenth century. Although there are differences in the types of Sino-Japanese writing, their meanings can be created by association through the "Kun" or meaning-based readings of the characters of which they are composed. This characteristic and the classical Chinese education of the scholars engaged in translating foreign materials during this period were important factors in the adoption of so many new Sino-Japanese terms. It is possible that this unique relationship between the Japanese and Chinese writing systems is responsible for the persistence of a passive attitude toward incorporation of foreign knowledge into Japanese. (MSE)

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Lexical Aspects of the Modernization of Japanese during the Meiji Restoration

Seiju Sugito

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Lexical Aspects of the Modernization of Japanese during the Meiji Restoration

Seiju Sugito

Introduction

In this report, I present a brief overview of the modernization of the lexicon of the Japanese language over the past ten or fifteen decades, that is, since the Meiji Restoration. Since the issues included under this rubric are widespread, the discussion will focus on the role that KANJI (Chinese characters) have played in the modernization process in particular in the increase of KANGO in the Japanese language.

Japanese linguists, in particular, sociolinguists often point out the following characteristic of the verbal behaviour of the Japanese people.

'Japanese cannot open a conversation without excusing themselves.' Following this modest custom of my country, I would like to start my report with an excuse about my English and the content of this paper.

To be frank, this is the first time I have ever given a presentation in English or in any other foreign language, for that matter. This is perhaps due in part to my unenterprising personality, but it may also stem

from another reason which emerges from a historical sociolinguistic perspective of Japan.

Most Japanese scholars since the Meiji Restoration, i.e., over the past about 150 years, have shown a persistent preference for learning primarily through the Japanese language. Of course, we have made some effort to acquire new knowledge from foreign cultures through the study of foreign languages. However, for the most part, we have chosen to study through Japanese translations of foreign materials. In our studies, we have avoided direct use, that is use approximating that of native speakers, of foreign languages. In another words, we have taken a 'passive attitude' in our acquisition of new knowledge from foreign sources. I use the term 'passive attitude' in reference to this tendency to use direct translation into Japanese, i.e. to view foreign materials through Japanese, as opposed to an 'active attitude' which would involve attempting to use a foreign language as a native speaker does. It is the persistence of this passive attitude towards foreign languages over the past 200 years since the age of foreign studies in the Edo period (cf. Takada, in this volume), which is responsible for the existing condition of the Japanese language today and for the present state of my English as well.

Thus ends my excuse for my English. However, this is also meant to serve as an introduction to this paper, in which I will discuss some aspects of translation into Japanese using KANJI (Chinese characters).

Some Remarks on the Japanese Writing System

As shown in FIGURE 1 (see also Takada, in this volume), Japanese can be represented using the following four types of letters: 1.HIRAGANA, 2.KATAKANA, 3.KANJI (Chinese characters), and 4.ROMAJI (Roman alphabet).

FIGURE 1

Among these four types, the roman alphabet is normally not included in the orthography of Japanese. It is possible to write all the syllables of Japanese in the roman alphabet as follows;

(1) Arigatoo <Thank you>
Sayoonara <Good bye!>
Sugito Seiju <a name>

However, usage of the roman alphabet in such cases as (1) is restricted to written materials for foreigners who cannot read the other Japanese letters.

The combined use of the remaining three writing systems, i.e., HIRAGANA, KATAKANA and KANJI, comprises the main of the Japanese orthography.

FIGURE 2 illustrates current usage with an example from a newspaper.

As the example shows, the three types of letters,

Figure 1 four types of letters in the Japanese Writing System

HIRAGANA あいうえお かきくけこ さしすせそ たちつてと

KATAKANA アイウエオ カキクケコ サシスセソ タチツテト

KANJI 日本語 ([nihongo]=Japanese language)
花([hana]=flower) 山([yama] =mountain)
言語([gengo]=language) 辞書([jisho]=dictionary)

ROMAJI a i u e o ka ki ku ke ko sa shi su se so

FIGURE 2 Examples of Orthography from Japanese Daily Newspaper

60年前の借金、千倍で返す

【シアトル二十五日＝UPI共同】高級チョコレートで知られる神戸の製菓会社「コスモポリタン」の社長、バレンタイン・モロゾフさん(七五)＝写真＝がこのほど、約六十年前の少年時代、シアトルの新聞社から借りっ放しになっていた一ドル五十セントの借金を、利息分にインフレを加算して千倍の千五百ドル(約二十五万円)にして返した。

モロゾフさんは「シアトルという町の名を聞くといつも気になってしようがなかった」と話している。

モロゾフさんは一九二〇年代、シアトルで地元紙「シアトル・ポスト・インテリジェンサー」の新聞売り少年をしていた。あるとき、一束の新聞の販売賃として一ドル五十セントを前払いでもらったが、一家が急きょ日本に引っ越すことになり、これを返せぬままになったという。

新聞社には特にこの貸金の記録は残っていなかったが、「志を尊重して」受け取り、同社の基金に組み入れることにした。

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HIRAGANA, KATAKANA and KANJI are intermixed in the Japanese written language.

FIGURE 2

It is possible to represent all of the syllables of Japanese using HIRAGANA and KATAKANA, i.e., the language can be written entirely in either of these two syllabaries. However, the normal practice and the official orthography is to use a mixture of Chinese characters(KANJI) and HIRAGANA. In general, word stems are written in KANJI, while inflectional endings, other suffixes, grammatical particles, etc. are written in HIRAGANA or KATAKANA.

Differentiation in the usage of HIRAGANA and KATAKANA is as follows. HIRAGANA are used for writing indigeneous Japanese words and suffixes in normal daily writing. KATAKANA, on the other hand, are used for non-Chinese loan words, i.e. loan words from Western Europe and America, onomatopoeia, emphasized words, and the names of flora and fauna, etc.

In the Japanese writing system, the same Chinese character can be used to write a variety of different words. Here, I would like to emphasize the distinction between the ON and the KUN readings, the two basic pronunciations assigned to characters. The ON ('sound-based") readings consist of Japanese imitations or approximation of the sound of the original Chinese syllable. The KUN ('meaning-based") readings

correspond to the native Japanese translational equivalent for the character. Thus, KUN-readings stand for the meanings of the characters as expressed by original Japanese words.

For example, the following characters all have the ON-reading KAKU [kaku] :

a 獲 b 拡 c 革 d 角 e 確 f 覚 g 各 h 格 ....

In addition to the ON-reading, [kaku], each of the above characters have one or two KUN-readings:

a 獲 toru <to catch, to gain>
b 拡 hirogeru <to widen>
b 拡 hirogaru <to spread>
c 革 kawa <leather>
d 角 kado <a corner>
d 角 tsuno <a horn>
e 確 tashikameru < to make sure>
f 覚 oboeru <to feel, to sence>

It is important to both make a distinction between the two kinds of readings as well as grasp the relation between them. First, KUN-readings, such as TORU, HIROGERU etc., are originally Japanese native word forms, in other words, KUN-readings express the meaning of the character using original Japanese words. On the other hand, ON-readings are phonetic readings based on Chinese pronunciations and therefore one can not make a direct association between the ON-reading and the meaning of the character in Japanese.

List of Chinese characters in Sugito's chapters

Page 5 Line 6, Line 9 ~ 16

a	b	c
獲	拡	革
d	e	f
角	確	覚
g	h	
各	格	

Page 6 Line 6

革

Second, it should be stressed that even when a given character is read in the ON-reading, the reader can create an image and associate the meaning of the character through recall of the KUN-reading of the character.

< ON-reading >	< KUN-reading >	< the meaning >
KAKU ———	KAWA ———	' leather '
(read [kakw])	(recall [KAWA])	(associate 'leather')

Thus, although ON-readings are phonetic readings based on the Chinese pronunciation of the character, they can be easily associated with the meaning of the character through recall of the KUN-reading.

The Classification of the Japanese Vocabulary

Japanese words are typically classified into the following four classes.

WAGO : Japanese native words (YAMATO-KOTOBA)

KANGO : words of Chinese origin

GAIRAIGO : loan words from English and other European languages

KONSHUGO : mixed words (WAGO+KANGO, KANGO+GAIRAIGO, WAGO+GAIRAIGO,..)

In the above terminology, '-GO' means 'word', 'WA-' in WAGO means 'Japanese', 'KAN-' in KANGO means 'Chinese', 'GAIRAI-' in GAIRAIGO means 'coming from a foreign language', and 'KONSHU-' in KONSHUGO means 'mixed'.

The relation between the above classification and the usage of the four types of letters can be described as follows:

Vocabulary Class	Written with
WAGO	HIRAGANA or KANJI in their KUN-reading
KANGO	KANJI in their ON-reading
GAIRAIGO	KATAKANA
KONSHUGO	mixture of HIRAGANA, KATAKANA and KANJI

KANGO is basically a class of words of Chinese origin, and is often referred to as 'Sino-Japanese', especially by foreign scholars. KANGO words are read in the ON-reading, i.e. based on the Chinese pronunciation of the characters. It is important to note that Sino-Japanese does not necessarily consist of pure loan words from Chinese. Many KANGO have been created in Japan by combining two or three KANJI in their ON-reading. For

example, the following KANGO were created in Japan during the Meiji period

l.2 人力車 jin-riki-sha < man - power - vehicle >
l.3 希望 kiboo < hope >
l.4 停戦 teisen < stop - war >

Since Sino-Japanese (KANGO) is read in the ON-reading, it is rather difficult to recall the meaning of a KANGO hearing only its pronunciation.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, an ON-reading can be associated with the meaning of a character through the character's KUN-reading. For example,

l.10

人	力	車	希	望	停	戦
hito	chikara	kuruma	negau	nozomu	tomeru	ikusa
man	power	vehicle	to hope	to desire	to stop	battle

Through the KUN-readings, 'hito', 'chikara', 'kuruma' etc., one can recall the meaning of the characters, character by character, and then by summing up the meaning of each character can create the meaning of the word itself. In other words, though written and pronounced in Chinese style, KANGO (Sino-Japanese) stands as a class of Japanese words, since the meaning of a KANGO can easily be recalled through the KUN-readings of its characters. Thus although the majority of KANGO are direct loan words from Chinese, they are understood through the Japanese language and thus reflect the passive attitude towards foreign knowledge mentioned in the preface to this paper.

Page 8 Line 2～4

line 2	line 3	line 4
人力車	希望	停戦

Page 8 Line 10

人　力　車	希　望	停　戦

The Distribution of WAGO and KANGO in Japanese Vocabulary : Some Results of Quantitative Lexicography

1. Research on 90 Magazines Issued in 1961

An overview of the modernization of the lexicon of the Japanese language, especially during the Meiji Restoration, indicates that the percentage of KANGO in Japanese vocabulary increased significantly during the Meiji Restoration. The statistical data which support this observation are summarized below.

Table 1 indicates the results of a quantitative survey of ninety magazines issued in 1961. This survey, carried out at the National Language Research Institute (NRLI), Tokyo, Japan, comprises the most exhaustive statistical data available on the daily written Japanese language at present.

Table 1

As cited in Table 1, the survey examined a total of 420,000 words of running text which consisted of 30,000 different words. A large percentage of the words studied here were KANGO, 41.3% of the running words, and 47.5% of the different words. These figures reflect the high number of Sino-Japanese in today's daily written language. The percentage of WAGO among the running words (53.9%) was considerably greater than that among the different words (36.7%). This is because WAGO include a great number of the fundamental words which are used frequently

Table 1 In 90 Magazines issued in 1961

	Running Words	Different Words
WAGO	53.9%	36.7%
KANGO	41.3	47.5
GAIRAIGO	2.9	9.8
KONSHUGO	1.9	6.0
Total(ca.)	420,000words	30,000words

(cf.NLRI 1962, 1963, 1964)

in all contexts, e.g. words like 'suru'<to do>, 'iru'<to be>, 'aru'<to be>, etc.

2. An Historical Overview of the 1,000 Words Used Most Frequently in Magazines in 1961

Fig. 3

Figure 3 gives an historical overview of the percentage of the different classes of vocabulary observed in a variety of texts since the 8th century. This graph, based on the same data as that given in Table 1, gives a macro-historical overview of the shift in the ratio between KANGO (Sino-Japanese) and WAGO (Japanese native words). Specifically, the data are based on a list of the 1,000 words that appeared most frequently in 90 magazines issued in 1961. The distribution of the four Japanese vocabulary classes among the 1,000 words studied was as follows.

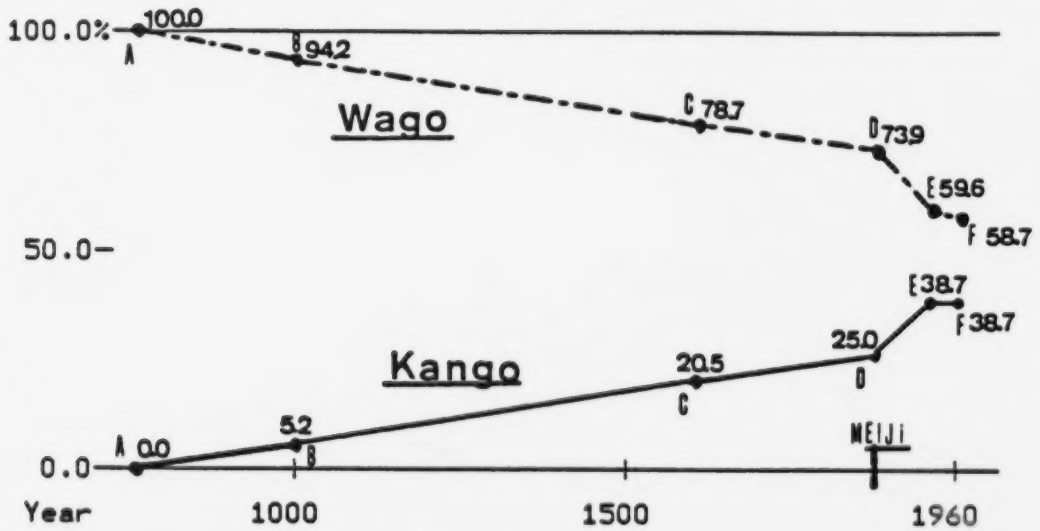
WAGO	KANGO	GAIRAIGO(loan word)	KONSHUGO(mixed word)	Total
584	383	17	16	1,000

The numbers given at each point in Figure 3 specify the percentage of the words from the list of the 1,000 most frequently occurring words mentioned above, that each text contained. The texts studied are given under the graph in Figure 3.

For example, the earliest text studied was the Man'yooshuu , the oldest

Figure 3 A Historical Overview of the 1,000 Words used most Frequently in Magazines in 1961

(cf. Miyajima1967)



Texts
A ; Man´yooshuu (ca A.D. 750)
B ; Genji-Monogatari (ca A.D.1000)
C ; Nippo-Jisho (A.D.1603)
D ; Hepburn E.J. Dic. (A.D.1867)
E ; Inoue E.J. Dic. (A.D.1909)
F ; Kenkyuusha E.J. Dic. (A.D.1954)

anthology of Japanese poems which consists of 4,500 poems edited in the Nara period (8th century). In the Man'yooshuu, 326 of the 1,000 most frequently occurring words were observed and all of these 326 words were WAGO. KANGO and GAIRAIGO did not appear at all. Thus, as indicated at the uppermost lefthand point of Fig.3, the percentage of WAGO in text A (Man'yooshuu) was 100.0% (326/326). In text F, Kenkyuusha's English-Japanese Dictionary, 992 of the 1,000 words were observed. Of these 992 words, 582 were WAGO, 382 were KANGO, 16 were GAIRAIGO and 14 were KONSHUGO (mixed words). Thus the percentage of WAGO was 58.7% (582/992= 0.587), and that of KANGO, 38.7% (382/992=0.387).

Figure 3 illustrates two interesting tendencies. First, the percentage of KANGO has increased, while the percentage of WAGO has decreased steadily since the 8th century. Second, this tendency was highly pronounced in the Meiji Period, as indicated on the right-hand side of the Figure 3. Note that Text D (Hepburn's English-Japanese Dictionary) was published in the first year of the Meiji period (1867). In summary, over the course of the history of the Japanese language, the percentage of WAGO has gradually decreased, while that of KANGO has increased, and in particular, the speed of the shift accelerated significantly during the Meiji period.

As mentioned above, WAGO contains the most fundamental words of the Japanese language and therefore one would not expect WAGO to drop out of the Japanese vocabulary. We thus interpret the tendency indicated in Figure 3 as the result of an increase in KANGO.

Changes During the Meiji Period

1. General Vocabulary as Observed in English-Japanese Dictionaries of the Meiji Period

Figure 4 gives a more detailed picture of the above-mentioned tendency in the Meiji period. This graph indicates the distribution of WAGO and KANGO in English-Japanese bilingual dictionaries edited and published during the Meiji period. As shown in Figure 4, the ratio of KANGO exceeded that of WAGO between the time when Dictionary C (1882) and Dictionary D (1888) were published. During this period, the distribution of KANGO and WAGO changed drastically.

Figure 4

---

2. The Distribution of WAGO and KANGO among Technical Terms in the Bilingual Glossaries of Some Specialized Disciplines

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of WAGO and KANGO in the vocabulary of several specialized disciplines. During the Meiji period, many bilingual glossaries were edited and published in a variety of disciplines. KANGO was dominant in the majority of these glossaries.

Figure 4 General Vocabulary in English-Japanese Dictionaries issued in the Meiji Period

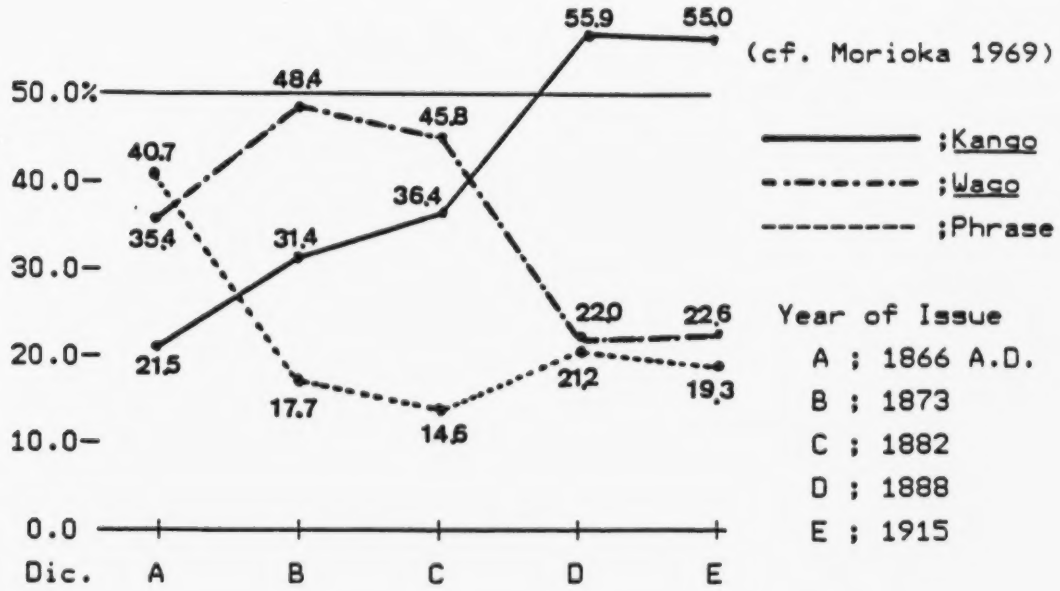


Table 2 Distribution of Technical Terms in the Bilingual Glossaries of Some Specialized Disciplines

	WAGO	KANGO	GAIRAIGO	KONSHUGO	Phrase	Total
Mathematics	5.3 %	85.2	3.1	1.9	4.4	1,089
Physics	20.2	41.7	20.7	7.3	10.0	955
Mineralogy	1.7	76.1	16.6	5.5	0.0	937
Philosophy	1.1	96.5	1.7	0.2	0.5	1,332

Year of Issue Math. ; A.D.1891 Physics ; 1888
Miner.; 1890 Phil. ; 1884
(cf. Morioka 1969)

Table 2

The distribution of vocabulary items varies across the disciplines studied. As shown in Table 2, philosophy was the discipline in which KANGO was most dominant (96.5%). In contrast, in physics, WAGO was rather strong (about 20%) and KANGO was relatively weak (about 40%). This latter tendency can be attributed to the dominance of vocabulary items which express natural phenomena in physics. Since these words for natural phenomena tend to be used not only academically but also in daily life, it follows that the percentage of WAGO should be relatively high in physics.

4. Types of KANGO (Sino-Japanese)

The above statistics indicate an increase in Sino-Japanese during the Meiji period. This increase was primarily due to the introduction of new knowledge from foreign countries, i.e., this increase in KANGO came about as a result of an increase in translation of foreign languages into Sino-Japanese (Chinese characters in their ON-reading).

Extensive research has been done on the manner in which these translations were achieved. Although it is not possible to present the results of this research in much detail, it is worth giving a brief overview of the five patterns on which these translations were based (Morioka 1969).

i. Translation into existing close Japanese equivalents.

e.g. < people > choonin 町人 ---- l.1
< servant > kerai 家来 l.2

'choonin' and 'kerai' have been used since the Edo period, i.e., since before the Meiji Restoration.

2. Translation into obsolete close Japanese equivalents.

e.g. < deduction > en'eki 演繹 l.6
< absolute > zettai 絶対 l.7

These examples illustrate the revival of dead words that had been used in Chinese classical texts.

3. Translation into existing word forms changing the existing readings of the characters.

e.g. < to honor > sonkyoo sonkei 尊敬 l.12
< a male > nanshi danshi 男子 l.13
< a female > nyoshi joshi 女子 l.14

'Sonkyoo', 'nanshi' and 'nyoshi' have been used since the start of western learning in the Edo period. 'Sonkei', 'danshi' and 'joshi' are new readings which were given to these forms during the Meiji Restoration.

4. Introduction of mainland Chinese forms as translational equivalents for corresponding foreign terms.

e.g. < arithmetic > suugaku 教学 l.21
< cube root > rippookon 立方根 l.22
< charge > inin 委任 l.23

These mainland Chinese forms were taken from the 'English-Chinese Dictionary' published in China, 1866.

Page 14 Line 1～23

line 1

町人

line 2

家来

line 6

演繹

line 7

絶対

line 12

尊敬

line 13

男子

line 14

女子

line 21

数学

line 22

立方根

line 23

委任

5. Creation of new forms

e.g. < earth > chikyuu 地球 l.2

(chi <soil> kyuu <ball>)

< pressure > atsuryoku 圧力 l.4

(atsu <to press> ryoku <power>)

Various patterns were followed in creating these new forms.

However, due to space limitations, they will not be discussed here.

Page 15 Line 2～4

line 2	line 4
地球	圧力

Conclusion

This paper focuses on the increase in the use of KANGO (Sino-Japanese) in the vocabulary of the Japanese language over the past 150 years since the Meiji Restoration. Although some differences among the types of KANGO were observed, they all have the following common characteristic: their meanings can be created by association through the KUN-readings of the characters which they are composed. This characteristic of KANGO was the most important factor for the introduction of so many new KANGO since the Meiji Restoration when Japanese intellectuals embarked on the study of foreign cultures and scientific disciplines that were then new to them.

The educational background of the scholars who were engaged in the study and translation of foreign materials was another factor which led to the increase in KANGO. Their education was centered about the Chinese classics, KANGAKU (Chinese study). Thus, one would expect that they were very familiar with the types of translation mentioned above.

From the viewpoint of the Japanese language itself, the existence of KUN and ON-readings, and the connection between the KUN-reading and the meaning of the character has played an important role in the adoption of vast numbers of KANGO (Sino-Japanese). It is possible that this unique relationship between the Japanese and Chinese writing systems is responsible for the persistence of the passive attitude towards incorporation of foreign knowledge among the Japanese.

Appendix : The Most Recent Stage of Modernization of the Japanese Lexicon:
A Brief Note on the Increase of GAIRAIGO (Loan Words from Western Languages)

In a discussion of the modernization of Japanese since the Meiji Restoration, especially after World War II, one cannot overlook the dramatic increase in the use of GAIRAIGO (loan words from Western languages).

Table 3

For example, Table 3 illustrates the increase of GAIRAIGO in the field of mechanical engineering. Among four technical glossaries, which were edited during the 70 years after the Meiji Restoration, i.e. from 1886 to 1955, both a decrease in KANGO and an increase in GAIRAIGO can be observed. We interpret the latter, increase in GAIRAIGO, as the most recent stage in the modernization of the Japanese lexicon.

Although our discussion must be brief, it is important to note that GAIRAIGO are usually written with KATAKANA (or the Roman alphabet in some cases). However, since KATAKANA lacks such keys for interpretation as the KUN-reading for KANJI (Chinese characters), it is difficult to associate a meaning with a GAIRAIGO which one comes across for the first time. Information about the word formation of GAIRAIGO, e.g. the meaning of morphemes, patterns of their composition, etc., is for the most part

Table 3 Shift of Vocabulary in the field of Mechanical Engineering in 4 Technical Glossaries During the 70 Year Period from 1886 to 1955

year of issue	WAGO	KANGO	GAIRAIGO	KONSHUGO	Total
A (1886)	13.6%	79.9	0.0	6.5	184 words
B (1909)	29.8	36.4	7.6	26.2	225
C (1932)	29.4	38.0	11.3	21.3	221
D (1955)	20.0	42.1	21.0	16.9	195

(cf. NLRI 1981)

unfamiliar to the Japanese. These factors suggest that the increase of GAIRAIGO plays a different role for the modernization of the Japanese lexicon today than KANGO did during and after the Meiji Restoration.

Acknowledgement

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